

# Excitement gives way to calm

By Karen White  
ENTERPRISE CORRESPONDENT

**PLYMOUTH** — The moment just before the sails unfurled was the most dramatic, the most wondrous, almost as if the hearts of everyone aboard the Mayflower II had stopped beating in anticipation.

Here, as I sit at a computer hours later, the room rocks with the slightest motion of the sea. It is difficult to shake the motion, just as it will be difficult to shake the memory of a sail on a ship built of wood but lashed together with myth, pride and patriotism.

The Mayflower II was built in 1957 by England as a gift for America. It sailed across the Atlantic Ocean once, on its way to home in Plymouth Harbor. At miscellaneous other times it has left the dock, but mainly reached its destination by tug.

In 1964 it tried to sail to Provincetown, the last leg of the Pilgrims' famous journey in 1620. High winds and rough seas made the master, or captain, call again for the tug. That was her last voyage under sail.

Plimoth Plantation, the owner of the vessel, decided that 1995, the 375th anniversary of the original Mayflower's arrival in the New World, was a good time to attempt another sail.

Yesterday was the climax of months of preparation, from fundraising to preparing a sea-ready crew to repairing the vessel. At precisely 7:25 a.m., the mystical moment arrived. The tow line was released and the ship was on her own.

From my spot in the Round House, the mate's cabin or upper most enclosed area of the ship, it took only a small stretch of imagination to replace the ship in 1620. All 20th century passengers were hidden, out of the way, not only to allow the crew to move about freely, but so that "authentic" video and photos could be taken.

Authentic was the sailors' sweat and strain as they hoisted the mizzenmast, one sailor calling gruffly "ho" to coordinate pulling of the ropes.

Others hung in the rigging, untying the sails and letting them drop. The main sail fell, tanned and worn with curling edges, looking like a piece of parchment large enough for God's quill. A puff

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of breeze set it full, and the Mayflower II was sailing.

My attention was consumed by experiencing the moment, the motion of the ship and the undeniable excitement of it all. It wasn't until I heard the sailors joking about the speed of the ship or, more accurately, the lack of speed, that I noticed something was amiss.

For one necessary element was missing. There was no wind. Our 20th century journey was the exact opposite of the Pilgrims', who suffered through almost continuous storms during their 66 days at sea.

The ship sailed for a bit, but signs of trouble were everywhere. The sea was motionless, smooth and silky. The ship's shallop, tied to the rear, crept up along the starboard side and would have passed the larger vessel if only her rope were let go.

As the hours went past and the Plymouth shoreline stayed disappointingly near, it became clear that there would be no rollicking sail, no waves crashing over the bow, no spray in our faces. The ride itself was calmer than your average bath in the bathtub, and both passengers and crew took to reading, trading bits of history, or snoozing on the main deck in the sun.

The thrill of the sail wasn't why most people were aboard. It was the significance of the sail, of connecting with the Pilgrims in a physical way, of having an expe-

rience practically no one else in the world can claim.

"Think of this dead air and how hard it is to breath," someone said. "Then think of the Pilgrims down below with that purely awful stench and this heavy air. Awful."

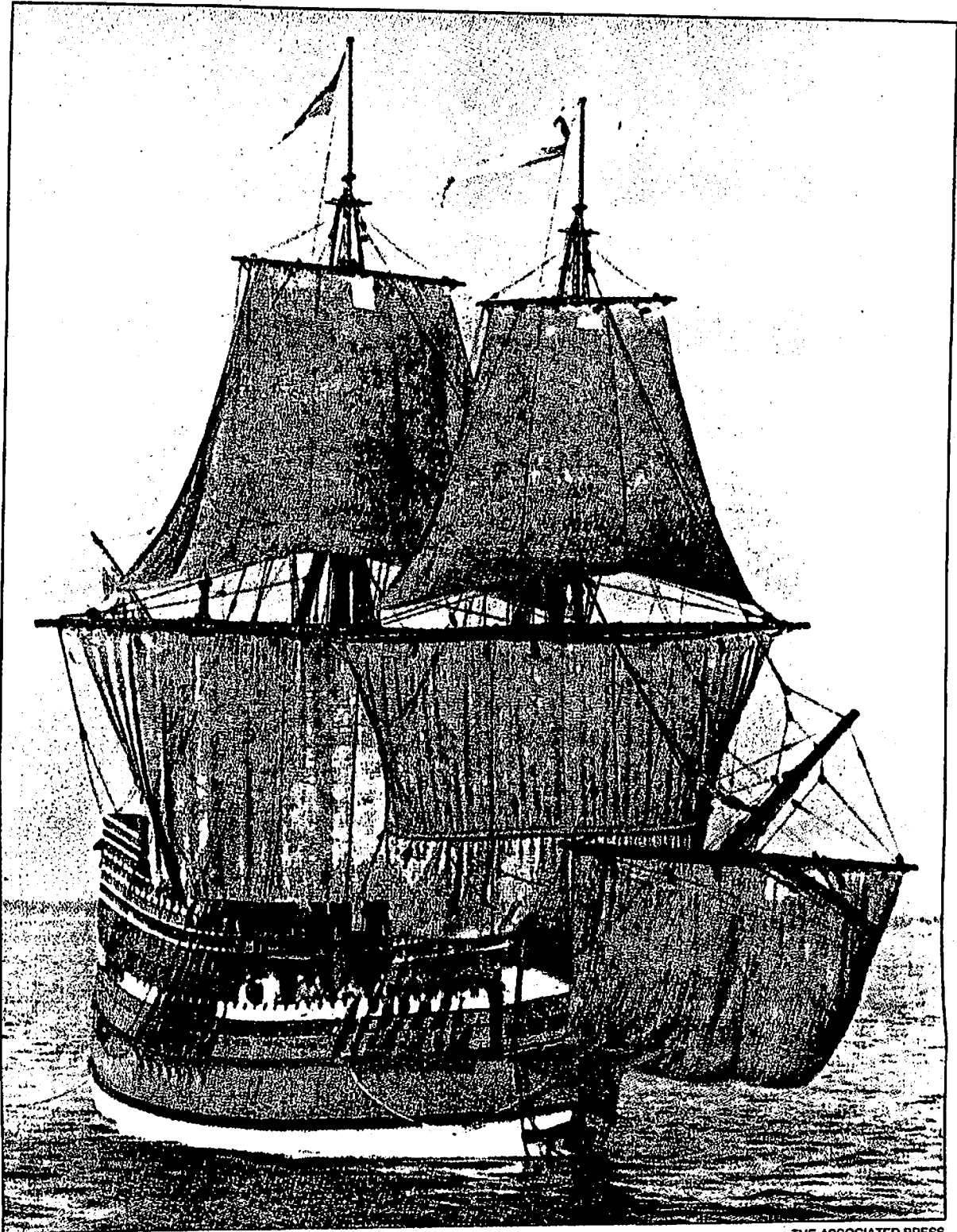
Others commented on the boredom of it all, how the Pilgrims stood the cramped, dull conditions for so long. "Can you imagine keeping 30 children amused on this ship for 66 days?" said another.

For the Pilgrims, the journey across the sea was of no importance. William Bradford, spiritual leader of the group, devoted practically no space in his journal to the Mayflower trip. Difficult and frightening, it was but a necessary means to a greater end.

As we neared Provincetown, again under tow and sails neatly tucked away, I sat upon the side of the upper deck, legs dangling over and watching the pleasure crafts of catamarans and yachts that came out to greet us. I held onto the rigging, not because I had to, but because I wanted to caress the ship in a very real way.

For us, passengers and crew, 65 persons strong, the journey didn't make history, but it will be remembered in our personal history books.

"By actually sailing on the Mayflower, it has come to life," Angus McCamy, the ship's 20th century captain for the sail, said. "It's a beautiful feeling. This is as close as we'll ever be able to come to the Pilgrims."



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*The Mayflower II is scheduled to sail back to Plymouth from Provincetown on Sunday.*

# Passengers' understanding of Pilgrims deepens

By Moira McCarthy  
ENTERPRISE CORRESPONDENT

PLYMOUTH — When the Mayflower crossed the Atlantic in 1620, she carried an assortment of sailors and soldiers, "Saints," merchants and adventurers.

When the Mayflower II crossed Cape Cod Bay Wednesday, the 17th century authentic reproduction ship carried quite a different human cargo.

Aboard for the rare voyage were educators and

students, writers and photographers, historians, filmmakers and 20th century sailors.

The occasion was the Mayflower II's voyage to Provincetown, a part of the celebration of the 375th anniversary of the original Mayflower's landing. Plymouth and Provincetown are sharing in the celebration, communities that each claim an important role in the founding of the New World.

The sponsor of the cruise, Chrysler-Plymouth,

chose a number of educators and students from around the country to join the crew on board.

Rose Marie Cipriano, a principal in a Cumberland, RI, high school, was thrilled when she learned she would be sailing aboard the Mayflower II.

"People would give their eye teeth for this," she said.

To mark the voyage, she carried with her a **PILGRIMS/Page 7**

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variety of items such as note paper and flags that she will distribute to schools in her district, items she can truthfully claim "sailed aboard the Mayflower."

She also had two packages of daffodil bulbs for friends to plant as a remembrance of the voyage. "Can I now call myself a second generation Mayflower woman?" she asked.

The two Plymouth representatives were teacher Diane Finn and fifth-grader Kevin Swiniarski of West Elementary School. Kevin, who won the honor through a lottery held at the school, called the trip a "once in a lifetime chance."

Finn said she was chosen because of her involvement with Plymouth history. She organized the Pilgrims' Progress for 10 years, runs historical tours for tourists and infuses her students with Plymouth history.

For her, the Mayflower II voyage recalled but paled in comparison to the original journey.

"It's not like we're on a one-way voyage away from our homeland, never to see it again," she said. "I have great admiration for the Pilgrims, who had such depth of conviction that they could leave everything behind."

Plimoth Plantation Chief Historian James Baker said little is known about the actual Mayflower and her voyage. William Bradford's extensive journal contains few paragraphs on the subject.

Probably built around 1606, she was an old ship by the time the Pilgrims' journey began. She would be scrapped only four short years later, in 1624.

The Pilgrims don't even mention the ship's name in their writings. Only in later land transaction deeds have historians been able to find the name of the Pilgrims' vessel, Baker said.

At Plimoth Plantation, historians have based an account of what happened on board the Mayflower from diaries and journals written around 1620, he said.

It is known for sure that one crewman spent quite a bit of time harassing the Pilgrims, who called themselves Saints. Baker said the sailor claimed he would see all the Saints "buried at sea." This particular crewman was the first to perish.

"I suppose they took some satisfaction from his death," Baker said.

The other death aboard the Mayflower was that of William Button, the physician's servant.

Also known about the journey is that a main beam cracked, putting the entire ship in peril, that John Howland fell overboard and that a baby was born.

Much is often said of the Pilgrims' bravery, but Baker said most of them "didn't know exactly what they were getting into. 'Some were left behind in Holland who had listened to stories of others who had made the journey,' he said, 'but I suppose it's like most brave acts. If you really think about it, you wouldn't do it.'"

The Mayflower II sail was the perfect opportunity for Naomi Foner and Stephen Gyllenhaal to collect information for a future movie. Foner is the author of several movies including "Losing Isaiah" with Jessica Lange and "Running on Empty" with the late River Phoenix, and Gyllenhaal will soon be directing a movie on the Salem witch hunts for HBO.

Foner is now working on a screen play of a love story between a Plimoth Plantation interpreter and a Pilgrim, sort of a "Brigadoon" with time travel, she said. Executives at Paramount Pictures have shown an interest, she said, and if they like the screen play they will make the movie. The sail came along just at the right time, she said.

"I sometimes think, what would it be like to be a Pilgrim," Foner said. "These people were the first immigrants. This sail makes it so much clearer to me that we're all foreigners."

Sailing the ship were Angus McCamy, captain, and William Gates, mate. Both have extensive experience sailing reproduction vessels, and understood the lure and attraction of sailing the Mayflower II.

"Casting off the tow line, under her own power with no engines," Gates said. "That was a very dear thing."

Sailing reproduction vessels is in some ways more challenging than sailing ships of the latest technology, Gates said. With no engines to rely on, sailors become attentive to every gust of wind, which helps to hone and sharpen seamanship skills.

But sailing a unique vessel like the Mayflower II is not without risk, McCamy said, a risk that must be weighed against the benefits each time a sail is planned. "There are all sorts of reasons not to take these ships out. There is only one Mayflower, you don't want to lose her," he said.

Carolyn Travers understands the risks of sailing aboard the Mayflower II. Her father, David Freeman, was one of the crew on the ship in 1964 when it hit rough seas on the way to Provincetown. She can vividly remember sitting in the living room, waiting for that phone call that would say her father was alright. He, the rest of the crew and the ship, survived through the storm.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of the sail was gained by the plantation interpreters, who spend 40 hours a week in the 1620s.

John Kemp, supervisor of the plantation interpreters, said climbing aboard the Mayflower would help with the constant struggle to grasp hold of the Pilgrims as persons. He changed into the garb and persona of Elder Brewster midway across the bay, leading the sailors and passengers in song and prayer.

McCamy agreed. "It's important for the interpreters to understand that the sailors and Pilgrims were confined to this world. They couldn't walk off at the end of the day," he said. "It's something that you can't get when the ship is tied to the dock."

While the facts are important, Baker said, an experience like the Mayflower II sail helps him to better visualize the history.

"I want to explain to people what it was really like," he said. "Being under the great big dirty sails is a sense you can't get anywhere else."